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ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
R 061604Z SEP 06  
FM AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 4316  
INFO RUCNFUR/DARFUR COLLECTIVE  
RUEHKL/AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR 0037

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 NDJAMENA 001112

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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: SENATOR OBAMA MEETS WITH PRESIDENT DEBY

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: President Deby stressed to Senator Obama the negative impact that continued violence in Darfur would have on regional security, and expressed his support for a United Nations Peacekeeping operation to pave the way for the implementation of the Darfur Peace Agreement. Deby also acknowledged the close bilateral cooperation between Chad and the United States on counter-terrorism initiatives. In response to President Deby's justification of his decision to suspend Chevron and Petronas' operations for alleged non-payment of taxes, Senator Obama noted the importance of governments' honoring their contractual obligations, and expressed his hope that an amicable solution could be reached between the disputing parties. END SUMMARY.

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SENATOR OBAMA'S VISIT AT THE PRESIDENCY  
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¶2. (SBU) On September 1, Senator Barack Obama met with President Deby to discuss key regional and bilateral issues. Obama thanked the President for Chad's cooperation with the United States and the international community on the humanitarian response to the Darfur crisis, as well as efforts on counter-terrorism. He stressed to the President that the focus of his trip was to examine the current conditions of the Sudanese refugees in Chad and determine ways to avert further violence in the region. The Senator also stated his interest in discussing other issues of bilateral concern.

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DEBY'S VIEWS ON DARFUR  
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¶3. (SBU) President Deby thanked the Senator for visiting Chad and for his interest in the impact of the Darfur crisis on Chad. He explained that the crisis in Darfur had had a profound impact on the economic, environment, and political security of Chad. The presence of Sudanese refugees was a significant environmental burden in Eastern Chad, as refugees meant increased competition for resources in the region. According to Deby, local communities, as well as the refugee population, were suffering; the international community, while providing assistance, needed to do more to assist the Chadian communities that were affected by the refugee inflow.

¶4. (SBU) At the same time, the spillover of conflict from Sudan into Chad was apparent with continued cross-border raids of Janjaweed militias, who were targeting refugee populations as well as local Chadian communities. President Deby pointed out that the Janjaweed militias had already inflicted casualties on Chadian communities, and created a large number of Chadian IDPs in the region. While the rains

may have temporarily restricted their movement, the coming months would undoubtedly bring more cross-border attacks against the Chadian population. He also noted that Chad's decision to host Sudanese refugees and actions to mediate between the Government of Sudan and Sudanese rebel movements made it a target of military action by the Sudanese government. Deby said that the April 13 attacks in N'Djamena by Chadian rebels was an effort by the GOS to destabilize the country, bring in a regime favorable to Khartoum, and inflict harm on Sudanese refugees in Chad.

15. (SBU) The President told Senator Obama that the implementation of Darfur Peace Agreement would create an environment for the eventual return of refugees back to Darfur, and help to stabilize the region. While imperfect, the DPA was the best chance for peace in the region, and the international community should help the GOS and supporters of Minni Minawi to peacefully implement the agreement. He noted that the international community should also not neglect to bring in those rebel movements who refused to sign the DPA. Deby asserted that without the inclusion of non-signatories in the framework of the DPA, fighting in the region would continue.

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SUPPORT FOR UN PEACEKEEPING FORCE  
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16. (SBU) President Deby expressed his strong support for the presence of an United Nations Peacekeeping force in Darfur. He argued that the presence of an international force with a robust mandate would permit the implementation of the DPA, and bring in the DPA non-signatories, who would be more willing to accept an accord with the presence of a UN force. Whereas the current African Union observer mission was

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ill-equipped and incapable of maintaining security in the region, a UN force would have the ability to secure the region and give hope to refugees seeking to return home, and Chadians on the other side of the border who were fearing further attacks from Sudan.

17. (SBU) When the Senator asked how the international community could convince Khartoum to accept an international force, Deby said that Africans already accepted a UN presence in Darfur with a resolution agreed to in the AU Summit in Banjul, and the international community already agreed to deploy a peacekeeping force with the passage of UN Security Council Resolution 1706. The question now was whether the international community would allow concerns of sovereignty of the Sudanese government to influence their decision to bring peace to the region. The African Union lacked the material means to bring peace to the region, the United Nations did not. Deby asserted that the international community should insist that the Sudanese accept a peacekeeping force, as it was the only way to end the crisis in Darfur.

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CHAD'S COOPERATION ON COUNTER-TERRORISM  
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18. (SBU) President Deby turned to bilateral efforts to combat terrorism, and noted that cooperation between the United States and Chad in the area of counter-terrorism was excellent. The GOC was appreciative of U.S. training efforts of the country's PSI battalion. He did note that the Chadians still required equipment, and had submitted requests in the past year to U.S. authorities. Senator Obama assured President Deby that if a request was submitted, then the Pentagon would be reviewing it.

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CHEVRON/PETRONAS TAX DISPUTE  
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¶9. (SBU) President Deby ended the meeting by discussing the GOC's recent actions taken against oil consortium members Chevron and Petronas. The President told Senator Obama that the Chadian government was trying to ensure that Chad benefited from the country's oil production. To that end, Chad was pursuing negotiations with the oil consortium to include the GOC as a member of the consortium, and had established a national commission to begin the process. However, according to Deby, the Chadian people could not benefit from the country's oil as long as consortium members Chevron and Petronas refused to pay taxes it owed to the GOC.

The President said that while Chevron and Petronas asserted to have a legal basis, in the form of an agreement signed by certain GOC ministers, for not paying income taxes, the GOC could not recognize such an agreement, as it was not approved by the country's National Assembly. Deby contended that his decision to suspend Chevron and Petronas from the consortium was an attempt by the Chadians to reduce the "economic inequality" between the GOC and the Consortium.

¶10. (SBU) Senator Obama told President Deby that while he could not speak for the U.S. nor Chevron, two principles needed to be considered: that the Chadian people should benefit from the country's natural resources, and that contracts needed to be observed. Chad, noted the Senator, could benefit from foreign investment, but if the rules of the country's business environment changed, foreign investors would be more hesitant to enter Chad's economy. He expressed his hope that the GOC and the parties could resolve the issue amicably, and that the GOC would develop a business environment where contracts were respected.

¶11. (U) This message was cleared by Senator Obama's staff.

¶12. (U) Tripoli Minimize Considered.  
JAMES